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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5577
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 0957
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0912
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 1495
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY 0575
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 5024
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 2117
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1496
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0889
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 1990
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1221
RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY 0328
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY 0967
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2342
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 0621
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 1259
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 0107
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0405

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/2016
TAGS: MARR PHUM PINS PREL PTER AS
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO SRI LANKA CONTACT GROUP
EXPERTS MEETING INVITATION

REF: A. STATE 140812

¶B. STATE 107231
¶C. CANBERRA 888
¶D. STATE 94541

Classified By: Acting Polcouns John W. Crowley, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is an action request. Please see para 6.

¶2. (SBU) Poloff met with Nigel Stanier, Executive Officer for South and West Asia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, on August 28, 2006, to follow up Ref A invitation for Australia to participate in the Contact Group's expert level meeting in Washington on September 27.

¶3. (C/NF) Stanier expressed surprise upon learning of the August 24 meeting, and to hear that no Australian Embassy representative had attended. The Australian Embassy in Washington had earlier relayed advice from unnamed contacts in the Department that the Contact Group initiative "had been overtaken by events," he said, giving Canberra the impression that the initiative had been suspended.

¶4. (C/NF) Noting Foreign Minister Downer's strong personal interest in the deterioration of the ceasefire in Sri Lanka, Stanier said the GOA would plan to send a representative, if not from Canberra then from the Embassy in Washington, to the September 27 meeting. On the question of Australia's confirmed participation in the Contact Group, he said the GOA is not yet ready to commit, pending additional details about how the Contact Group will operate, but wanted to have a presence at Contact Group meetings.

¶5. (C/NF) On the status of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE), Stanier said the GOA had not yet made a decision whether to go beyond its current sanctions (asset freezing and travel restrictions) against the LTTE and to list the

LTTE as a terrorist organization under its domestic laws. Recent developments in Sri Lanka had "encouraged" the GOA to lean more strongly in that direction, however. He cited as examples the increase in LTTE-perpetrated violence and some disturbing indications that it was targeting non-Sri Lankan interests, such as the recent attack on the Pakistani High Commission.

¶6. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: There appears to have been some disconnect between the Australian Embassy and the Department regarding the Contact Group. Embassy would appreciate Department's assistance in contacting the Australian Embassy to offer a briefing on the Contact Group's activities, or, alternatively, providing us with the name of a contact we can pass to the Australian Embassy through DFAT.

OWENS